

“Dark Phoenix”

By Helen Lutz

As a kid my mother rarely allowed me the opportunity to read comic books; she always pushed the classics like “Little Women,” “Black Beauty” and “Treasure Island.” I also read just about every one of “The Hardy Boys” mystery books ever written – not a fan of “Nancy Drew.” I’m still drawn to reading mysteries in the evening before bed interspersed with conspiracy theory novels. My favorite authors are Robert Ludlum and Ayn Rand.



Since comic books were a rare treat and usually included the likes of “Archie” or “Richie Rich” I’m probably not the best critic of comic book character movies. Since I don’t have the story backgrounds going back decades in some cases, I look at the comic book genre of movies as whether or not I was entertained for a couple of hours. That being said brings me to the new X-Men movie currently in theaters, “Dark Phoenix.”

The story behind the X-Men has fascinated me from the standpoint that the public tends to fear and ostracize those who are different instead of embracing unique talents. Over the years and throughout the many X-Men movies the characters are sometimes loved and sometimes hated or feared. In “Dark Phoenix” the government calls upon the X-Men to use their extraordinary capabilities to save the crew of a space craft which is gone awry. Without a second thought X-Men leader Professor Charles Xavier (James McAvoy) calls his team to action and off they speed to the rescue, but not without some doubts by the team members. Lately Charles has been enjoying a bit too much of the spotlight and kudos for jobs well done by his team.

Jean Gray (Sophie Turner), whose powers are telepathic and telekinetic, is among the X-Men on the rescue mission. All goes well until the group encounters some sort of force, maybe a solar flare – or perhaps something much more ominous. Putting herself in harm’s way, Jean saves everyone on the mission by encountering the force; a force which then takes its form inside her. Having had problems since childhood controlling her abilities, this new power takes its toll on Jean and everyone she knows and loves. It is not smart to tick her off.

Whenever a great power appears, usually it is followed by those who want to harness the power. In Jean’s case by an alien race led by a shape shifter named Smith (Jessica Chastain) who looks to capture Jean’s powers and make the world their own – also not a smart idea.

“Dark Phoenix” entertains audiences for a couple of hours with great special effects and action, however, the story meanders a bit causing us to lose interest in the characters; especially Jean. When Jean uses her newfound powers it reminds me of my four year old granddaughter who believes she has super powers and loves to show them off. On a scale of one to four Hart Beats, I give “Dark Phoenix” ♡♡. It’s not a bad way to spend a couple of hours during the hot San Antonio summer, especially watching it on a big screen. P.S. Don’t bother waiting until the end of the credits...